



ORIENTATION AND TRANSITION POLICY

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1 NQF

| | | |
|-----|-------|--|
| QA6 | 6.1.1 | Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decision. |
| | 6.1.3 | Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family well being. |
| | 6.2.1 | Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities |

2 National Regulations

| | | |
|------|-----|--|
| Regs | 177 | Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by approved provider |
|------|-----|--|

3 Aim

- 3.1 To ensure that all children and families feel engaged with the service and develop meaningful relationships with the educators, children and other families.
- 3.2 To provide children and families with an orientation procedure that allows the family to transition to their child into our service, transition to a new room within the service or transition to school.
- 3.3 Establish and maintain positive relationships with preschool children, families, educators, and primary schools that will support children's transition.
- 3.4 Provide a transition process that is responsive to the needs of the preschool children and their families.
- 3.5 Provide a comprehensive preschool program that encompasses all learning opportunities and reflects continuous development for each child.
- 3.6 Support educators understanding of successful transition processes for children through ongoing training, participation in networking opportunities, providing current research journals, and attendance at conferences.

4 Related Policies

The Kids' Uni Policies and Procedures apply to Kids' Uni North, Kids' Uni South, Kids Uni CBD, Kids Uni iC.

Enrolment and Booking Policy (CHI-ADM-POL-022)

Family Law and Access Policy (CHI-ADM-POL-025)

Physical Environment Policy (CHI-ADM-POL-046)

Relationships with Children Policy (CHI-ADM-POL-050)

Staffing Arrangements Policy (CHI-ADM-POL-055)

Transition to School Policy (CHI-ADM-POL-059)

Unenrolled Children Policy (CHI-ADM-POL-062)

5 Orientation

The transition from home to an education and care service is a milestone for both children and families. Kids' Uni understand our orientation practices are a key foundation for building strong, collaborative



partnerships with families and supporting successful transitions into our settings. (Refer to *Kids' Uni Orientation and Transition Framework* for further information).

Implementation

- 5.1 Families will be encouraged to attend the service with their child to meet the educators, and begin to develop a sense of belonging with the environment. Time is given to respond to individual children as they become comfortable with these new relationships and environments. We recognise that positive interactions at this time (between parents, educators and the child) are important for the children to build a sense of security and relationships within the space. We acknowledge that each child is different and so there are no set times or numbers of visits that suit everyone, it is flexible to respond to individual needs.
- 5.2 The orientation process must acknowledge the uniqueness of all new children and families enrolling at the centre and be respectful of families various parenting styles. The process must also take on board all information provided by the family about their child. We recognise families as the most significant people in that child's life.
- 5.3 A Key Educator will be assigned prior to orientation to each new child for continuity purposes. This educator will be a part of the orientation process. All room educators will be aware of child's needs and be able to meet and greet family members to ensure a level of emotional security for both the child and family.
- 5.4 Every family will receive an orientation meeting prior to commencement. During this meeting:
 - i. Every educator will be aware of the new child's orientation meeting and when they will be commencing enrolment.
 - ii. The Nominated Supervisor and Key Educator will meet with the family at a mutually convenient time to work through/gain information around: the family, their wants, needs and feelings; enrolment forms; parent handbook and centre policies (Guiding Children's Behaviour Policy, Children Who are Ill Policy, and Child Wellbeing Policy); routines; educational programs; Kinderloop; safety and WH&S requirements; any cultural, religious or spiritual beliefs; custody orders; allergies; service philosophy; medical needs and plans; sign in and out procedure; grievance and feedback procedures are discussed. Further information about this meeting is outlined in *Kids' Uni Orientation and Transition Framework*
 - iii. Children and families will be introduced to all staff. Families will spend time with Administrative Officer to discuss enrolment documents, fee process and requirements.
 - iv. Families and children are given a guided tour of the service and further questions answered.
 - v. Kids' Uni Partnership Form will be used to gain understandings around family's expectations of the service, educators and educational program.
 - vi. Where applicable, Nominated Supervisor/Key Educator will support family to complete the following additional forms: Breastfeeding Support Plan, Transition plan for separation anxiety, 0-2 years' routine form. These may be completed at any time during the child's enrolment.
 - vii. Families and children are encouraged to make arrangements with the Nominated Supervisor/Key Educator regarding a series of visits to allow familiarisation with the



service, the room, educators and the other children. According to regulations and licensing requirements families must stay with their child during visits as part of the orientation process.

- 5.5 The Nominated Supervisor and Key Educator will ensure that enrolment information is communicated to all room staff. Any additional information such as court orders, dietary requirements, medical conditions, will be provided and communicated to all relevant staff members.
- 5.6 The Nominated Supervisor will contact any relevant support agencies for children with additional needs in order to assist with a smoother settling in period.
- 5.7 All orientation or transition processes will be regularly evaluated. At the end of each family's orientation process, families and children will be asked for feedback and this will form the basis of any adjustments or changes to the orientation/transition. Any feedback will be recorded by the Nominated Supervisor and then passed onto relevant educators (*Refer to Form 6 – Orientation Parent Feedback Form*).
- 5.8 It is imperative that the child and family are regularly asked for feedback on how the child is adjusting to the service or transitioning into the next classroom. This should be done on a daily basis so that staff can ensure the child is on track for a successful orientation/transition.
- 5.9 Orientation/transition of children (and all feedback) will be raised at room and educator meetings to ensure all educators have been provided with consistent information and are all working towards the same outcomes. The Nominated Supervisor is to record minutes of meetings and make available for educators to peruse as necessary.
- 5.10 Families must always be kept abreast of how the orientation/transition plan is going. Educators must also consult with parents about how any feedback will be used to adjust the orientation/transition plan. This ensures families are continuously communicated with. Educators can liaise with parents, arrange another meeting, or use phone contact to ensure this happens.

6 Transition from one room to another

Transitioning between classrooms within a service can be as significant and overwhelming for a child and family as the transition into the service for the first time. It is essential for educators to support all relevant parties through this process.

Implementation

- 6.1 Children who are of age to transition to the next classroom will be supported by educators to visit the classroom as frequently as possible, even if they have not yet been offered a position within this space. Information about these visits will be shared with families via Kinderloop and verbal communication regularly.
- 6.2 Decisions will be made to transition children in consultation with the Key Educator, the Director and the family. Age is only one determinant in deciding to transition a child. Children's social, emotional, cognitive and physical development will also be considered. Each child's relationships with peers and educators will also be considered.
- 6.3 Each individual copes with change differently and therefore we will individualise the support offered to children and families to cope with these changes.



- 6.4 Educators will consult with families about what expectations, desires, and requirements the family have for settling their child successfully into this new environment. Such information will form the basis for the transition process.
- 6.5 A Key Educator within the new room will be allocated and communicated to the family prior to the child's first day within the space. The current Key Educator will complete a *Key Educator Handover Plan* for the new Key Educator.

7 Transition to school

- 7.1 Transitioning to school marks a time of change in a child's life. Children thrive on predictability and consistency; change can have an impact on their lives. Educators and families can support children in this transition by assisting them to understand the changes that are likely to happen as part of this transition.
- 7.2 Our work with children is intended to support their development from a holistic approach and will focus on all areas of development. Social and emotional readiness for school is critical. Children who can function socially within a classroom environment will feel a sense of belonging and will feel safe and secure in the learning environment. These children will be more successful learner's long term.
- 7.3 Children who have a positive start to school are likely to enjoy school and engage in learning, and therefore, experience longer term academic and social success. Programs that support a child's transition can assist in achieving this positive start to school.
- 7.4 We know that children learn more in their first few years of life than at any other time. Research shows us that exposure to a quality play based early childhood program has a positive impact on children's brain development. Skills and dispositions that will enhance children's success at school are acquired throughout our daily program.
- 7.5 We understand that school orientation is only one part of the transition to school process and that the transition process should involve all stakeholders – children, families, early education and care centres and schools.

Implementation

- 7.6 When the child becomes of the age to attend school, the service will work with the parents and the school to support this transition.
- 7.7 When a child first attends school, there is a great change for that child and for their family. We believe that the child's parents are the most important link in this transition.
 - i. The Service will always talk about starting school in a positive manner that will reinforce a healthy attitude toward the transition.
 - ii. If possible, information on local schools will be made available to parents.
 - iii. When possible, toward the end of each year an excursion is arranged to visit the local school so as to familiarise the children with the school environment.
 - iv. Information regarding school readiness is shared and discussed with families throughout the year.
- 7.8 The importance and value of good relationships between educators, child and family must be emphasised with families.

- 7.9 Experiences that will support children's learning are available at all times and are embedded into our daily educational programs and routines. Such experiences build on children's strengths and also develop areas where children may require more support.
- 7.10 Children are provided with spontaneous and intentional learning opportunities that support children to meet the five outcomes of our National Curriculum document, the *Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF).
- 7.11 We recognise that it is important to support children's dispositions for learning such as curiosity, resilience, creativity, collaboration, empathy, independence, flexibility, innovation and reflection. By developing these dispositions rather than focusing on knowledge content it allows children to be lifelong learners and able to learn in a world that we cannot yet predict.
- 7.12 Some examples of experiences that may be offered in our program that would support a successful transition to school may include:
- * children learning to work, communicate and participate in group situations.*
 - * intentional teaching and modelling around social concepts such as sharing and turn taking.*
 - * guiding children through appropriate conflict resolution strategies.*
 - * encouraging children to be socially responsible citizens in caring for their immediate and broader environments.*
 - * supporting the development of empathy in children so that they can be understanding of others within their learning environments and broader community.*
 - * learning about diverse cultures, people and ways of being in order to develop tolerance and acceptance of others.*
 - * children having a sense of agency and responsibility in decision making within their environments.*
 - * intentional and spontaneous learning about cognitive concepts such as:*
 - literacy (writing, phonics, book handling skills, pre-reading skills such as learning the direction of text, exposure to a variety of texts and text types)*
 - Numeracy (exploring mathematical concepts such as counting, measurement, numeral recognition, addition, subtraction)*
 - other mathematical concepts (such as grouping and sorting, weight, shapes).*
 - scientific concepts including opportunities for experimentation, investigation, problem solving and the use of technologies.*
 - * children learning self help skills in toileting, dressing and managing their own belongings.*
 - * children learning to be responsible for their own health and wellbeing, including developing an understanding about their bodies and making healthy choices to support their physical development.*
 - * children having opportunities to develop physical skills including fine motor development to support writing (development of pincer grip), balance, hand-eye co-ordination, foot-eye co-ordination.*
- 7.13 We recognise that successful transitions will occur when they happen in partnership with educators, families and schools. Sharing of information between all stakeholders is encouraged in the lead up to the transition, within our privacy guidelines.
- 7.14 We will support families by making resources and information available. Information evenings may be held for families to provide information around the transition process. Information regarding relevant community events such as expo's or transition to school picnics will also be shared with families.



- 7.15 Educators will undertake a summative assessment for each child transitioning to school. The NSW Department of Education *Transition to School Statement* will be the tool used to communicate this assessment information with families and primary schools.
- 7.16 Social events may also be organised to support children's transitions, including inviting children who have transitioned to school back for visits in the following year. This allows for the children to share their experiences with their peers who remained at Kids Uni.

8 Sources

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

National Quality Standard

9 Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years and the review will include Management, Employees, Families and Interested Parties.

10 Version Control Table

| Version Control | Date Released | Next Review | Approved By | Amendment |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------|---|---|
| 1 | Feb 2012 | Feb 2013 | Michele Fowler Manager – Kids Uni | |
| 2 | Feb 2013 | Feb 2014 | Michele Fowler Manager – Kids Uni | Paragraph inserted re application of policies across all centres. Migrated into new QA format. This policy replaces the Orientation for Children and Families Policy. |
| 3 | Feb 2014 | Jun 2016 | Michele Fowler Manager – Kids Uni | Policy reviewed with no changes required. The review period changed to 2 years. |
| 4 | Jul 2018 | Jul 2020 | K.Grose – Children's Services Manager | Added some philosophical approaches to the policy that have shifted our practice since last review. Removed feedback form from policy. Separate form already exists. |
| 5 | November 2019 | Jul 2020 | Nicole Bray – Director Kids Uni iC | Updated to reflect name changes to Kids Uni iC. Removed section 7.2.v regarding school lunch provision. |
| 6 | July 2021 | July 2023 | Louise Windisch – Director Kids Uni North Sara Bainbridge Gardner - Educator | Reviewed to align with Orientation and Transition Framework. Combined Transition to School Policy and Orientation Policy. |

Appendix 1 – Orientation and Transition Framework

Kids Uni Orientation and Transition Framework



Kids Uni acknowledges the importance of establishing quality practice to support children and families to successfully transition into the service, between classrooms and to other educational settings.

This framework outlines the practices Kids Uni services will implement to support children and families to feel secure, confident, included and supported within our services during periods of change and transition.

“Transitions, including from home to early childhood settings, between settings, and from early childhood settings to school, offer opportunities and challenges. Different places and spaces have their own purposes, expectations and ways of doing things. Building on children’s prior and current experiences helps them to feel secure, confident and connected to familiar people, places, events and understandings. Children, families and early childhood educators all contribute to successful transitions between settings.” (EYLF, pg.19).

Types of transitions:

- ☐ Transitioning to a Kids Uni service for the first time
- ☐ Transitioning between classrooms
- ☐ Daily transitions within the service
- ☐ Transitioning out of a Kids Uni service

□ Transitioning to a Kids Uni service for the first time.

The transition from home to an education and care service is a milestone for both children and families. Kids Uni understand our orientation practices are a key foundation to building strong, collaborative partnerships with families and supporting successful transitions into our settings.

Orientation meeting:

Every family will receive an orientation meeting prior to commencement. During this interview, the child and family will discuss all items outlined in the Parent Orientation Checklist (Form 007).

- Meeting times will be planned to meet the needs of the family, educators, admin team, director and the service routine.
- Every educator will be aware of the new child's orientation meeting and when they will be starting at the service
- Offer multiple orientation visits to allow the child and family time to engage with children, educators and the routine
- Unpack the family's expectations of the service, the educators and the educational program using the Kids Uni Partnership Form
- Outline strategies for saying goodbye on the first day, including information about welcome stations (if applicable), and the experience of separation.
- **Sign In and Out procedure explained**
 - Show electronic sign in
 - Each person dropping off/picking up must use own mobile to sign in/out
 - Must occur each day
- Where applicable, Director/Key Educator will support family to complete the following forms (these may be completed in the first two weeks of child's commencement):
 - Breast Feeding Support Plan
 - Transition plan for separation anxiety
 - 0-2 years routine form



Key educator/family meeting (conducted during orientation meeting)

- ☐ Spend time getting to know the family and how they feel about their child starting care
- ☐ Reflect on family personality colour (Red, Blue, Green or Gold) and consider how they may like to be communicated with
- ☐ **Care Routines:** *We will want to work closely with you to follow your child's individual routine, wherever possible. We will follow all children's cues and offer sleep/bottles/comfort as needed.*
 - ☐ 0-2 Years Routine (F009)
 - ☐ Meals/ Menu
 - ☐ Sleeping
 - ☐ Breast Feeding Support Plan
 - ☐ Kinderloop activity menu to view care routine information
- ☐ Structure of staffing – educator to child ratios, educator shifts, director, children's services manager, cooks, admin
- ☐ Introduce staff
- ☐ Programming
 - ☐ **Circle of Security and Key Educator approach:** *At Kids Uni, we use attachment based theories and the Circle of Security, alongside a key educator approach with our children and families. We recognise relationships as the foundation for supporting children's learning. Our pedagogy promotes continuity and consistency through nurturing relationships between educators, children and their families, through our key educator approach.*
 - ☐ *The key educator approach supports the building of a strong, secure, reciprocal and communicative relationship between each child and their family, which is based on trust and respect with one key educator whilst the child is with us. I will be your child's key educator during their time in the _____ room. This relationship is supported by a secondary educators (other educators) when I am unavailable.*
 - ☐ *We use moments of care routines as times for connection with our focus children and utilise them as opportunities to build relationships with children. For example, when changing a child's nappy, we ensure we are present, taking our time and ensuring we are kind and respectful, talking children through each step of the routine and encouraging their active participation. We become their secure base and safe haven during their time at the service. We encourage them to explore the environment and learning opportunities, and welcome them back in when they need comfort and support.*
 - ☐ **RIE** – *We are inspired by the Educaring Approach. We aim to embed elements of these practises into our spaces by ensuring our social and physical environment is "physically safe, cognitively challenging and emotionally nurturing" (RIE, 2020). We underpin our every interaction with even the youngest infant with respect; always ensuring we are encouraging children to be active participants rather than passive recipients by always doing things **with** not **to** children. We trust children's competence, and work in partnership with each individual to ensure they feel competent, connected, autonomous and secure within our spaces. We believe in giving children time for uninterrupted play and freedom to explore the social and physical environment.*
 - ☐ **Individualised Learning** - *Each child's individual strengths, needs, interests and abilities are observed, analysed and planned for as part of our ongoing planning cycle. We recognise*



play as having significant positive impact on the structural design of the brain and therefore plan play based learning experiences to further children's development.

- **Partnership with families** - *Our relationships with families is equally important as it is with their child. Open communication with families is pivotal to supporting children's successful transition into the service, and throughout their journey with us. Families are encouraged to actively contribute to their child's learning journey by sharing their understandings of their child.*
- **Show programming display and Kinderloop.** *We will use Kinderloop to communicate with families regarding their child's learning and development, important notices for the service (including health information) and updates on day to day experiences.*

☐ **Partnership form**

- *Talk about importance of collaborative partnerships with families - We recognise that families are children's first and most influential teachers and that learning outcomes are most likely to be achieved when early childhood educators work in partnership with families.*
- *Work through format with families or invite them to take home and complete*
- *Become skilled at interpreting family comments – e.g. "I just want them to have fun and make friends" = goal around social skills and a sense of delight at the service*

☐ **Parent Involvement**

- *This can occur in ways each family feel comfortable with. For example, some families become involved in the service by providing feedback on policies, others engage with children through story telling or sharing special talents (e.g. yoga) and some families visit for lunch. We encourage all families to share photos and anecdotes of family life via kinderloop or email.*

☐ **Communication between Educators and family – Verbal, Kinderloop, Communication Books**

☐ **Family Information Library – available for borrowing**

☐ **What we provide/what families need to bring**

☐ **Strategies for saying goodbye:**

- *Daily separation from families into the care of educators is becomes one of negotiation, where child, parent and educator come together and the child experiences that responsibility for their care shifts from the parent to the educator. The child needs to know that both adults have him/her in mind as they communicate in a relaxed way about the transition, and indicate that the educator is ready to look after him/her. Families should reassure children that 'educators name' will keep them safe until they return. (See Row Boats Metaphor in Appendix)*
- **Welcome Stations:** *Each child's daily transition into the service sets them up for a day of openness to connection and learning with peers and educators. In order to support successful daily transitions, we have established welcome spaces to support educators to be physically predictable and emotionally available to all of our children and families.*

☐ **Take a photo of the child during orientation (with the child and family consent) to set up locker tag, allergy charts (if applicable) prior to the child's commencement**

☐ **Educator to show:**

- Daily Routine
- Menu
- Lockers

Child's First Day at the Service

- ☐ The Director will ensure every educator knows when a new child is starting and will know the parents'/carers' names. This may be shared via a communication diary or kinderloop.
- ☐ Educators will address the child and family by name.
- ☐ The child's key educator will ensure the following will be set up ready for the child's first day to help establish a sense of belonging:
 - Child's locker tag
 - Kinderloop profile
 - Key educator identified
 - Cot/bed (if applicable)
- ☐ Educator welcoming the family upon arrival will check in with child and family about how they are feeling. Clarify any questions and remind of sign in/out procedure, lockers, bottle prep area etc. if necessary.
- ☐ Educators will support the child/family to say goodbye when they are ready to do so. Remind them they can contact the service at any time.
- ☐ The key educator will contact the family during the first day via phone to provide an update on how the child is settling in and information about their engagement in experiences and relationships.
- ☐ Key educator to send 'Day One Welcome Post' to family via kinderloop. This will include:
 - Information about how they have settled in
 - Strategies used to build child/educator relationship
 - Links to information from partnership form (if returned)
 - Information about care routines – meals, toileting/nappies
- ☐ Educators will greet the family at the end of the first day. Share information about the child's day. Invite and clarify any questions.
- ☐ ***Please note: If the child's key educator is absent for the child's first day, another educator within the room will ensure the above practices are completed.***



Week 2 check in

Director to contact the family via phone or upon arrival/collection to check in.

- ☐ Ask the family if they have any concerns, questions or feedback.
- ☐ Ask if their expectations are being met. If not, invite further feedback to move relationship forward.
- ☐ Ask if they had the opportunity to meet all educators. Offer support to build rapport as needed.
- ☐ Ask if they have accessed Kinderloop. Offer support as needed.
- ☐ In partnership with the family and key educator, develop a transition support plan if needed.

☐ Transitioning between classrooms

Transitioning between classrooms at a service can be as significant and overwhelming for a child and family as the transition into the service for the first time. Children and families may feel uncertain about new room expectations, educators and routines. Kids Uni will implement the following practices to ensure children and families feel supported and informed.

- ☐ Children who are of age to transition to the next classroom will be supported by educators to visit the classroom as frequently as possible, even if they have not yet been offered a position in this space. Information about these visits will be shared with families via kinderloop and verbal communication regularly.
- ☐ Educators will develop a social story with information about routines and expectations of the classroom for children. These will be kept in the preceding room and be explored with children regularly.
- ☐ When a position becomes available for a child to move to the next room, the service Director will contact the family to discuss the change and how the transition will be supported. Invite questions and concerns from the family.
- ☐ Family and child will be notified of the new key educator prior to transition to the new classroom
- ☐ Educators will develop an introduction letter for families about the classroom which will be provided prior to transition. The letter will outline:
 - o Educators names/photos
 - o Room routine expectations
 - o Welcome station location
 - o Any other important/relevant information about the new classroom
- ☐ Current key educator will complete the Key Educator Handover Plan for new key educator
- ☐ All educators and family will know the date of the child's first day in the new room

Commented [k1]: Is this something which will be done in consultation with families?

□ Daily transitions within the service

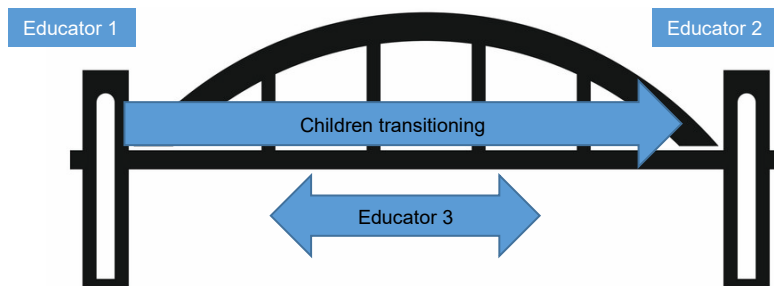
Due to their frequency, daily transitions within the service may be considered to be minor, however they have the potential to cause children a significant level of stress. Children's individual needs must be considered during any transition, including transitions within the daily routine. Daily transitions include transitioning between learning spaces and transitioning between routine times.

"Transitions tend to be the most difficult and stressful moments in any education and care service. At these times children often display more challenging behaviours and educators feel like police officers [rather] than nurturing educators. If you are uncomfortable or frustrated during transition times, this is a sign that your current schedule may need to be revised to better meet the needs and developmental levels of the children in your care." (Barb Gallick and Lisa Lee, 2010).

To reduce children's stress and foster positive experiences during daily transitions, Kids Uni educators will implement the following strategies:

- Reduce the number of transition times to as few as possible
- Transitions should occur in small groups wherever possible so they are less overwhelming and better supported
- Ensure transitions occur slowly and in ways which ensure children feel supported and heard
- Support children to understand the daily routine and what is coming next
- Use a 'transition bridge' for all transitions. Educators will act as pillars of each side of the bridge - at least one educator stationed at the first space, supporting the children to transition out, at least one educator positioned in the next space supporting children to transition in, and one educator moving between both spaces supporting children to transition between the spaces.

□



- Consider individual children's needs and implement supplementary strategies for children who may need additional support. This may include using strategies outlined in a child's individual support plan.

Appendix 2 – Supporting transition to school at Kids' Uni

Supporting transition to school at Kids' Uni





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- Play Based Learning



Our context in the Early Childhood Education and Care sector is embedded in play based learning.

The underlying values of our national guiding frameworks – The Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Framework – of play-based learning and intentional teaching are central to Early Childhood educational programs across Australia in Long Day Care, Preschool and Prep type services.

- What is play?

While there is no one definition of play, there are a number of characteristics that can describe the fundamentals of play. These include:

- It is enjoyable and pleasurable. While play can include some frustrations and challenges, enjoyment is a key feature.
- It can be symbolic or pretend. At times, children's meanings in play are not always evident to adults.
- It can be active in physical, verbal or mental ways and can include engagement with materials, people, ideas or the environment
- It can be freely chosen, prompted or invited
- It is usually process oriented with no goal or end in sight

- What is play based learning?

Play based learning draws from children's natural engage with experiences based on their interests, and abilities. When children are engaged in experiences they find fun and enjoyable, they are motivated to learn and develop positive dispositions towards learning. Educators use their of children's interests and abilities to scaffold learning and development and enhance lifelong

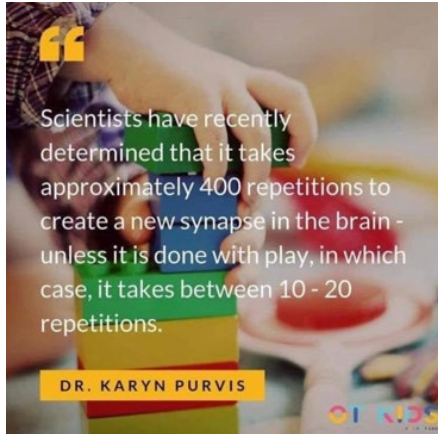


desire to strengths

more

knowledge children's skills.

- Brain Development



Why is play based learning so important? Because recent research shows play as having significant positive impact on the structural design of the brain.

Research shows that supportive, predictive environments based on secure, responsive attachments are significant factors that contribute to healthy brain development.

Play provides children opportunities to explore, identify, negotiate, take risks and create meaning. Play supports the development of social, cognitive, physical and emotional skills which supports successful transitions to formal schooling and enhances academic learning.

The below diagram shows the development of neural pathways in the brain across a range of ages. As you can see, significant development occurs during the first years of life. With this in mind, it is crucial we view children's preparation for schooling, and life, as occurring right from birth. By exploring and fostering positive dispositions for learning from birth, children are better placed to transition successfully into formal school environments and develop a lifelong love of learning.

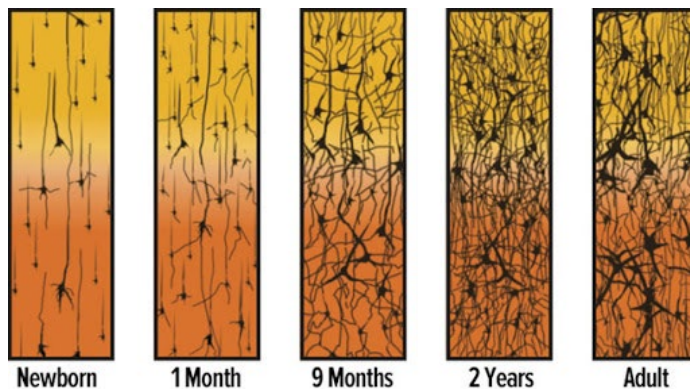


Image retrieved from: <http://www.urbanchildinstitute.org/why-0-3/baby-and-brain>

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- Educational Programs at Kids' Uni

- Dispositions for learning

Dispositions are qualities or attitudes towards learning. Developing positive dispositions provide children with skills for lifelong learning. When children develop confidence, enthusiasm, curiosity, creativity, persistence, empathy and resilience (to name a few!) they can engage in learning in many environments. Living in a rapidly changing world means we cannot possibly predict the specific skills children will need to participate in education and workforce settings in the future. By teaching children dispositions for learning, we equip them with skills and values to adapt to changing environments and expectations. Positive dispositions provide the foundation for which all learning can springboard from.

At Kids Uni, we support develop positive dispositions range of intentional teaching Educators are purposeful in responses to children to foster approaches to learning. For they support children to take be involved, persist when faced challenges and uncertainty and ideas, theories and values.



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- Supporting Social and Emotional Development

Social and emotional development refers to children's ability to understand and manage their emotions, interact successfully in a range of contexts and have a positive sense of self. Critical to children's success in formal school settings is their ability to engage successfully with others. Children need to be able to form friendships, wait their turn, work in small groups, resolve conflict with peers, self-regulate their emotions and negotiate their needs to participate effectively in a classroom setting.

At Kids Uni, we use everyday interactions and play based experiences as social and emotional learning opportunities. Friendships are facilitated and supported through intentional teaching strategies. We teach children to think through and solve the day-to-day social difficulties they encounter. We implement teaching strategies such as questioning to help children think through situations and encourage them to take others' feelings and perspectives into account.

Relationships with peers provide children the opportunity to be able to work together and negotiate their own physical safety. Children are given the time and space to work collaboratively to explore, extend and discuss their ideas. Educators are always close at hand to be able to offer support and suggestions if required.

Children develop the capacity to listen to and take on the ideas of others in small group experiences, fostering a sense of respect for the rights and opinions of others.

and



Meal times at Kids Uni are a social opportunity in which children have the capacity to engage in relaxed and enjoyable conversations, with and without the input of an educator.

Educators facilitate many different skills through their interactions, like building empathy for others, using intentional teaching practices to question and promote questioning, role modelling effective communication skills, and supporting children to be able to engage in conflict resolution. Our educators are able to do this through the strong relationships that they have formed

with your children, by ensuring that they are available, predictable and consistent.

Children are provided with many opportunities to work alongside peers to be able to build skills such as turn taking, sharing, negotiating rules, and the concepts of fairness within a social group. Games are a valuable way for children to explore all of these concepts and be able to express their own ideas of fairness and equity within social situations.

• Supporting Literacy and Numeracy Development

Literacy and numeracy are important skills for children to develop. At Kids Uni, like all early childhood services, we embed literacy and numeracy concepts into our practices through play based learning. Play-based learning plays a crucial role in the development of literacy and numeracy skills.

Both literacy and numeracy are forms of communication; ways in which we represent and share information with others about our world. Because literacy and numeracy are essential life skills, children need opportunities to use them (and to see them being used) in real life situations. When children are exposed to literacy and numeracy learning through hands-on, practical and play-based experiences, they are more likely to engage meaningfully and successfully with them.



There are endless opportunities for children to engage in literacy and numeracy learning in Kids Uni services. We provide language and mathematically rich environments and implement intentional teaching strategies to support children to transfer learning from one context to another.

As children play shopping in the home corner, using play money and a cash register, they begin to engage with counting, addition, subtraction and

various other mathematical concepts. When children 'read' a recipe and measure out ingredients as



part of an experience making play-dough, they are working with ideas about volume, quantity and measurement and learning how procedural texts work. Such experiences allow children to connect with literacy and numeracy at their own pace and to use their ideas and language in contexts that mirror real life.

When educators read stories to children, there are supporting children to develop key literacy concepts. Children develop awareness that print and pictures convey meaning in different ways, an awareness of authorship and illustration, book handling skills such as orienting book so cover is at the front, turning pages and reading right to left and top to bottom. When children 'take an order' when playing restaurants, or write notes about their patient in the 'doctors surgery' they are making marks and scribbles on the page to represent their thoughts. By scribbling or drawing their ideas, children begin to pay attention to using common symbols, so others can read what they wrote. They are also learning that keeping records helps to remember events or tasks. Educators ensure books and pencils or textas are available for children in the environment, and encourage them to incorporate literacy into their play.

When educators read and recite nursery rhymes, read books with repetitive rhythm, rhyme and sound repetition, encourage children to chime in with each chorus, sing songs, clap out syllables and make up nonsense rhymes with children, they are supporting children phonological awareness - that spoken words can be divided into smaller units of sound such as syllables.

• Supporting Independence and Self-Help Skills

"Independence contributes to the development of self-esteem, identity and wellbeing. Doing something for yourself produces a powerful sense of achievement and success" (Touhill, 2013). As children's independence increases, so does their confidence and sense of self.

In a classroom setting, there may be up to 30 children present with one teacher, so children are expected to be able to engage in tasks independently and manage their own needs and belongings.

In Kids Uni services, educators support independence and self-help through a range of everyday tasks and learning experiences.

Dressing – Children are supported and encouraged to dress themselves where possible, including putting on their shoes and socks, their jackets and hats or pulling up their pants during toileting routines. Children also have the opportunity to practice dressing skills when they play with dolls in the home corner setting as they dress and undress them. We support children by teaching them effective ways to get this right while they are learning and encouraging them along the way. We take our time and allow children to build their confidence; we understand that shoes and jackets can be quite tricky to master, but an important skill to have in the busy school playground.

Looking after belongings – Each child has a locker to store their bag throughout the day. Children are encouraged to put their belongings back in their bags, as well as shoes away in their space and hats in their individual hat pockets. These experiences also support name recognition and sense of identity and belonging. This is an important skill when moving into a formal school setting where all children in the class, and school, have identical hats and jumpers!

We also have sunscreen stations available for children to safely apply their own sunscreen with the assistance of educators when needed. Mirrors are available and children are supported in their own application, discussions around sun safety generally occurs during this time. To further develop self-

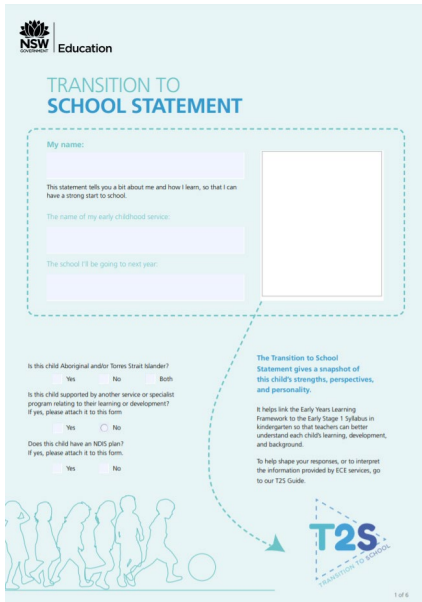
help skill children are also supported and encouraged to make their own beds ahead of rest time and to put their sheets away in their bags if brought from home.

Toileting - Toileting experiences are supported and positive learning opportunities from the babies' rooms right through, as children develop skills around hygiene practices and dressing themselves. Children are encouraged to wash their hands independently, supported by an educator from very early on and are supported and assisted to use a toilet as they navigate this skill.



Meal times – Meal times are all about independence and choice. Children's self-help skills and sense of agency are promoted every step of the way, from assisting with the setting up of tables and meals, to choosing a seat at a time when they are ready to eat as meals are either roving or in small groups. Children are supported and encouraged to serve their own food and options are available to them. By taking ownership of the process, we find the children are inclined to eat more and try different things. When possible, children are involved in meal prep. Often opportunities arise for children to grow herbs and vegetables to add to the menu for the day as well as meal prep experiences such as buttering their own bread. This involvement and ownership over meal times fosters an understanding of healthy food choices and accountability for their own wellbeing, which encourages independent choices to support their nutrition.

- Department of Education Transition to School Statement



The form is titled "TRANSITION TO SCHOOL STATEMENT" and includes fields for "My name:", "This statement tells you a bit about me and how I learn, so that I can have a strong start to school.", "The name of my early childhood service:", "The school I'll be going to next year:", and a large empty box for a photo. It also contains several checkboxes for background information and a "T2S" logo at the bottom.

The Transition to School Statement is a Department of Education template which your key educator will complete in September/October for you to provide to your child's school. This document provides a snapshot of each child's strengths, perspectives, and personality, and also gives them a voice in how they feel about transitioning to school.

The Transition to School Statement links the Early Years Learning Framework to the Early Stage 1 Syllabus in kindergarten so that educators and teachers can better understand each child's learning, development and background.

At Kids Uni, we draw our enrolments from across the Illawarra, meaning that children transition to many schools across our community. Wherever possible we endeavor to establish relationships with schools to support each child's transition. We reach out to schools to find out the best way to engage with them and participate in meetings as needed to discuss children's

individual needs. Please feel free to share the Service Director's contact details with your child's school should they request it.

-

- Tips for transitioning to school

(Many thanks to Mount Terry Public School Principal David O'Connor for providing the following information)

- **Is my child ready?**

Children can enrol for kindergarten if they turn 5 on or before 31st July in the year that they start school. All children must be enrolled in school by the time they turn 6.

Deciding on whether to send your child to kindergarten is a big decision, and one many families agonize over for many months, particularly if your child's birthday falls in the first few months of the year. Your child's educators will be able to give you guidance about their readiness for school. It is important to seek guidance from their potential school about their readiness as well.

There are lots of things you can do to help your child prepare for Kindergarten.

Below is a list of developmental skills that you might expect a child to be able to do when entering Kindergarten. Please remember that these skills are not compulsory requirements. This list has been developed to be used as a guide only. If a child is unable to do some (or even many) of the skills listed, that's ok! Families should advise the school about any areas their child needs support and the school will provide this upon the child's commencement into school.



- **English and Use of Language:**

- Talks to other people about familiar objects and events
- Asks and answers simple questions
- Makes their needs known
- Follows simple instructions
- Uses books for enjoyment or for looking at pictures
- Identifies pictures in books, magazines, television or digital media
- Uses a variety of things to draw, scribble or write (e.g. pencils, pens, textas, paintbrushes, sticks in the dirt, digital devices etc.)
- Joins in singing familiar songs
- Can be easily understood by peers and adults

- **Mathematics:**

- Recognises that numbers can be used to count
- Uses words such as many, a lot, more, less
- Identifies things in a group that are different
- Sees differences in shapes
- Differentiates between opposites – up and down, under and over, in-front and behind, day and night

- **Personal and Social Skills:**

- Uses the toilet independently
- Can say their own name
- Adapts to unfamiliar settings and new experiences
- Can finish a task, and tidies up afterwards
- Plays cooperatively with other children - shares and takes turns
- Can sit still to listen to a story for a few minutes
- Is curious about the world
- Can share an adult's attention with several other children
- Participates in imaginative play

- **Physical Skills:**

- Uses scissors to cut along a straight line
- Enjoys a variety of indoor and outdoor play
- Can put on and take off jumpers, shoes and socks independently
- Makes and designs things using a variety of materials



- Choosing a school

What is the difference between a public and a private school?

All schools (public and private – including Catholic schools) work from the same curriculum across each year/grade. Faith based schools also often have an additional subject - Religion. Most public schools provide a 30-60 minute Special Religious Education (SRE, commonly referred to as scripture) or Special Ethics Education class once per week.

- School fees are compulsory in a private school. They are not compulsory in public schools.
 - Generally speaking, costs associated with a child's attendance at private schools are much higher than at a public school. When deciding on the type of schooling experience for your child, it is suggested investigating what additional supports or experiences your child will receive if you are paying for private education to help you make an informed decision.



How do I go about choosing?

- Due to recent changes in policy, non-local enrolment in a public school is now only possible if the enrolment application meets the non-local enrolment selection criteria. More information about this can be found on the Department of Education website <https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/going-to-a-public-school/enrolment>
- You can use the 'School Finder' on the Department of Education website to understand which school you are zoned for. Just enter your address to view your local school (public schools only).
- If you are choosing between a number of schools, it is best to arrange visits to each to gain an understanding of each school and whether it is right for your child and family. Wherever possible, going during school time while the children are in the classrooms provides opportunity for you to see the school in operation. You can request a tour around the school, and to have a look inside a Kindergarten classroom. Asking lots of questions, finding out about what makes the school special and considering any special programs that might especially suit your child's needs will support you to make an informed decision.

- Talk to other parents who send their children to the school and ask them about their experiences. It is important to gain a range of perspectives, however the best way to understand if a school is right for you is to engage with the school directly.
- Remember that schools can change. Many families share with us their perspectives of a school based on their memories from many years ago. It is important to make your decisions about a school on their current practices and pedagogy.
- Your child's educators are also a great source of information about the right school for your child.

• Enrolment processes

What do I need to do to enrol?

- Complete an enrolment form.
- Provide the school with copies of documents such as birth certificate, immunisation details, proof of address and other school specific forms.

Medical Information:

- It's essential to tell the school before your child starts if he or she has any allergies or medical conditions.
- You should also let the school know of any major changes to your child's health as soon as you are aware of them.

What if my child has additional needs?

- Specialist advice and support is available to parents and caregivers of children with additional needs to help them access appropriate educational services.
- Talk to the school as early as possible about your child's needs.
- Extra support is also available for students who are newly arrived in Australia or for whom English is a second language.



- Attending orientation sessions

Orientation days help you and your child become familiar with your school and the new school routine. The more a child is familiar with the school environment, the more likely their transition will be successful.

Contact your school to find out when these days will be. Some schools have one orientation day, others have more than one. Every school is different but these programs are a very important part of transition.

- At orientation days you can:
 - meet the teachers
 - find out about the school and its programs/policies
 - see/order uniforms
 - learn what your child will do in their first year of school
 - ask questions
 - meet other parents and P&C representatives
 - find out about ways to become involved in the school
- At orientation days your child will:
 - Meet Kindergarten teachers
 - Meet other students, including their senior buddy (if the school has a buddy program)
 - Experience some of the school routines
 - Tour the school
 - Ask questions
 - Complete some set tasks so that the teacher can make observations to help with the transition process when they start school
 - See that school will be fun!



- Best start assessment

The Best Start Kindergarten Assessment is a literacy and numeracy assessment conducted for all Kindergarten students during their first five weeks of school.

All children begin school with a range of early literacy and numeracy knowledge, skills and understandings. The Best Start assessment supports teachers to understand each child's abilities and needs to develop effective learning programs for each child.

It is important that families understand that the Best Start assessment is not a test, and you do not need to prepare your child in any special way. You can support your child by talking positively about the experience and reassure them that it is merely another visit to the school to get to know their teachers.

For more information on the Best Start Kindergarten Assessment, visit

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/best-start>

- What will my child learn at school?



As outlined above, all schools (public and private) implement the same curriculum. There are 7 Key Learning Areas in primary school curriculum:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science & Technology
- Geography
- History
- Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PD/H/PE)
- Creative Arts

- Transition for the whole family

Transitioning to school is a big change for the entire family. Whether it is your first born heading off to school, or your fifth born, it will impact on the dynamics and routine within your family. You may wish to consider the following points when planning for the year ahead.

- New routines – moving into a school setting will impact your family's daily routine. School hours are reduced, there may be expectations around learning at home (homework and home readers) and lunches need to be made! Consider establishing morning and evening routines in the months leading up to starting school to ensure they are embedded in your family practices before the beginning of the school year.

- Siblings – a sibling starting kindergarten will impact all children in your family. For older children who are already enrolled in school, they may feel a sense of responsibility or protection over their younger sibling. It may impact on their peer friendships having their younger sibling at the school. For younger children who have spent a lot of time with their sibling, they may feel unsure or lonely as their sibling transitions to school. Consider how you will offer support to all children in your family. Reassure older siblings that while they can support their kindy sibling, they do not need to be responsible for them, the teachers will keep their sibling safe! Where possible, spend time with younger children while they readjust to life without their older sibling by their side during school hours.
- In a formal school setting, there may be less opportunity to connect with your child's teacher as you have at Kids Uni. Ask your child's school, and teacher, the best way to exchange information with them.



Healthy lunchboxes

Packing a lunchbox may be new for many families and it can be overwhelming to know what to include. A useful guide is to include 2-3 snacks and something for lunch. Snacks should be nutritious and come from a range of food groups – vegetables, fruit, dairy, wholegrains and meat or meat alternatives. It is important to remember that children at school have limited time to eat their lunch and snacks and can sometimes feel they have to finish everything in their lunch box. Having time to

play is important for children to engage in peer friendships which support a positive school experience. Reassure children that they do not need to finish everything in their lunch box. Ensure children can open any containers and packaging, as there may no be individual support to do this.

Don't forget a water bottle each day!

For healthy lunch box ideas and suggestions, visit:

- <https://freshforkids.com.au/>
- <https://www.taste.com.au/recipes/collections/healthy-school-lunch-ideas>
- <https://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/recipes.aspx>

- School age care





Many families need to support before and after school, or during school vacations. School Age Care is an education and care service available to support families during these times. School Age Care services may be located at your child's school. If not, children may be transported to the School Age Care service located at a nearby school or community centre.

If you will be using a School Age Care service, it is important your child feels comfortable and familiar with the educators, the setting and the routine, including transport to and from the service. Visit the School Age Care service with your child in the months prior to starting school. Ensure your child is comfortable with transport facilities or getting to the School Age Care centre from their classroom. Your child's school may be able to arrange for an older child to pair up with your child to support them on the journey until they are comfortable doing it themselves. Remind your children that they will be attending before or after school care each day they are required to attend to support their transition.

To find out which School Age Care services provide care for students at your child's school, speak to staff at the school.

More information on school age care can be found at:

<https://www.startingblocks.gov.au/other-resources/factsheets/choosing-quality-oshc/>

- **School Uniforms:**

- Your child's school will have its own uniform requirements.
- To keep costs down, many schools have a uniform shop and/or clothing pool with new and used items.
- Your child's school can also tell you which shops stock the school's uniform or the material you need to make it.

- **Tips for home:**

Pretend School Days:

- Practicing school days can not only be fun but it can also highlight where your child might need a little extra help in gaining confidence about going to school.
- You may also identify routines you need to change to fit in with school life.
- Some school routines to practice together include:
 - Dressing in the school uniform
 - Putting on school shoes (new shoes may cause blisters – ask your child to wear them in a little before school starts)
 - Testing school lunches (can your child open their lunch-box or packaging by themselves?)
 - Going to the toilet on their own (has your son used a urinal before?)
 - Drinking from a bubbler

Road Safety:

- Teach your child how to be safe when going to and from school.
- Make sure they know:
 - How and where to cross the road
 - Where to get in and out of the car
 - What the signs around the school mean
 - About stranger danger
 - Be a good role model for children!



- **Final Thoughts:**
 - Be involved with your child's transition to school
 - Discuss your child's learning with their Kids Uni educators
 - Be enthusiastic about school and learning
 - Support the school and your child's teacher
 - Keep teaching your child at home
 - Encourage your child in their schooling and social interactions
 - Communicate with your school and the teachers
 - Don't be afraid to ask questions of us or the school – we understand this is a tricky time!
 - Enjoy the ride!



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